

BASIC FLAG ETIQUETTE

Standards for handling and displaying the American flag are set forth by the United States Code, enacted by Congress in 1942. The Federal code does not impose penalties for improper handling or misuse of the flag, but some states do have laws regarding this subject, and our fellow citizens expect the flag to be treated with respect.

The Basic Rule

Do not allow the flag to touch the ground, floor, water, or anything else beneath it. Fasten the flag securely to the pole so that it does not become soiled or damaged. Do not use it as a drapery, a table covering, or as a receptacle for carrying or holding anything.

Respect for the Flag

- No disrespect should be shown to the American flag. It should not be dipped to any person or thing. Regimental colors, State flags, and organization or institutional flags are to be dipped as a mark of honor.
- The flag should never be displayed with the union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property.
- The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water, or merchandise.
- The flag should never be carried flat or horizontally, but always aloft and free.
- The flag should never be fastened, or drawn back in folds. It should always be allowed to hang free.
- The flag should never be fastened, displayed, used, or stored in such a manner as to permit it to be easily torn, soiled, or damaged in any way.
- The flag should never have placed upon it, nor attached to it, any mark, insignia, letter, word, figure, design, picture, or drawing of any nature.
- The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything.
- The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.